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PRIORITY

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STAFF

ACTION: CI/CLFL (861) INFO: ODPD-D, RF, FILE, CIDORECORD, QA/FILE,  
C/LA/RB, DC/LA/RB, LA/APUB-4, LA/OPS, C/CI, CI/LA-2, EPO/LA, SA/ODDO,  
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85 7372647 ASP

PAGE 001  
TOR: 222110Z MAY 85

IN 7372647  
C 24380

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TO: PRIORITY DIRECTOR, C INFO C

WNINTEL TAZZA LWCATCH

SUBJECT: MEETING WITH US MARSHALLS RE JOSEF MENGELE

REF: DIRECTOR 379800 (ONLY SENT C)

1. EMBASSY TASK FORCE CHAIRED BY CHARGE AND CONSISTING OF COS, CHIEF POLITICAL SECTION AND SECOND POLITICAL OFFICER, AND DEFATT, MET WITH US MARSHALLS/TEAM (USMS) ON AFTERNOON 21 MAY 85 TO DISCUSS BROAD PARAMETERS OF JOINT EFFORT TO APPREHEND MENGELE. USMS TEAM CONSISTED OF STANLEY MORRIS, DIRECTOR, USMS; HOWARD SAFIR, ASSOCIATE DIRECTOR FOR OPERATIONS AND IN CHARGE OF USMS MENGELE TASK FORCE; DONALD FERRARONE CHIEF, INTERNATIONAL BRANCH; AND A. RALPH ZURITA, SPECIAL ASST-TO DIRECTOR FOR OPERATIONS. MEETING WAS MOST USEFUL IN LAYING THE GROUNDWORK FOR A FORMAL AGREEMENT BETWEEN VARIOUS AGENCIES INVOLVED IN HOW TO MOST EFFECTIVELY PURSUE AND APPREHEND MENGELE. CHARGE EMPHASIZED THAT NO FORMAL AGREEMENTS COULD BE REACHED AT THIS MEETING DUE TO ABSENCE OF AMBASSADOR AND SECONDLY, REQUIREMENT FOR DEPARTMENT TO FORMALLY APPROVE EMBASSY'S RECOMMENDATIONS RE EMPLOYMENT OF USMS AGAINST MENGELE. EMBASSY WILL BE SENDING ROGER CHANNEL MESSAGE SUMMARIZING MEETING AND OUTLINING ITS RECOMMENDATIONS FOR DEPT APPROVAL. COS INFORMED TEAM OF HIS INTENT TO BE FULLY COOPERATIVE AND SUPPORTIVE. TEAM IN TURN INFORMED COS OF ITS DESIRES TO RELY HEAVILY ON STATION FOR SUPPORT AND COORDINATION. TEAM SAID NEXT STEP WOULD BE FOR ONE OR TWO MARSHALLS TO VISIT ASUNCION IN NEXT COUPLE OF WEEKS TO BEGIN IN DEPTH DISCUSSIONS ON DETAILS AND MECHANICS OF JOINT COOPERATION.

2. BASED ON ITS RESEARCH OF ALL AVAILABLE DATA, USMS IS CONVINCED THAT MENGELE IS STILL ALIVE. THEY ARE LESS CERTAIN AS TO WHETHER OR NOT HE STILL IS IN PARAGUAY. TEAM ADVISED THAT IT HAS ALREADY A STABLE OF ASSETS, APPARENTLY VOLUNTEERS, WHICH USMS INTENDS TO RUN IN ITS OPERATIONS AGAINST MENGELE. IN THE ENSUING DISCUSSION, THERE WAS A STRONG SENSE THAT ASUNCION SHOULD NOT BE USED AS AN OPERATIONAL BASE FOR THE USMS DUE TO THE DIFFICULTIES OF RUNNING CLANDESTINE OPERATIONS ON THE SCALE ENVISAGED IN THE FISHBOWL ENVIRONMENT OF ASUNCION, COUPLED WITH FACT THAT SMALL SIZE OF EMBASSY WOULD MAKE IT DIFFICULT ACCOMODATE USMS PRESENCE SECURELY. SUGGESTED ALTERNATIVES WERE SUCH CITIES AS SAO PAULO OR MONTEVIDEO FROM WHICH THE USMS COULD RUN THIRD COUNTRY OPERATIONS INTO PARAGUAY; ALTHOUGH USMS GROUP RESIDENT IN ASUNCION WAS NOT EXCLUDED AS A LAST RESORT.

3. CHARGE MADE IT A POINT TO EMPHASIZE POSSIBLE ADVERSE EFFECTS ON U.S. PARAGUAY BILATERAL RELATIONS IF PRES. STROESSNER EVER FOUND ABOUT USMS OPERATION. THIS DISCOVERY IS ALMOST INEVITABLE, GIVEN FACT USMS WILL BE DEALING WITH PARAGUAYAN SOURCES,

COORDINATION WITH State USMS

DMT

SG/EDI	TRAVEL PROGRAM
	ABSTRACT
	INDEX
	RYBAT REST. CODE FOR COMET DOCUMENT
SG/HS	CODE
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	FILE
	FILE
LA/WP	FILE

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SECRET

22 MAY 85  
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# SECRET

85 7372647 ASP

PAGE 002  
TOR: 222110Z MAY 85

LN 7372647  
[ ] 24380

EVEN THOUGH THIS MIGHT BE VIA A THIRD COUNTRY. PARAGUAYANS WILL TALK AND EVENTUALLY STROESSNER WILL HEAR OF IT. IN DISCUSSING POSSIBLE FALL OUT ON BILATERAL RELATIONS, CHARGE FRANKLY ADMITTED HE WAS WAFFLING, IN PART BECAUSE OF ABSENCE OF AMBASSADOR. HE THUS MADE IT CLEAR THAT 21 MAY DISCUSSION WAS ONLY PRELIMINARY AND EXPLORATORY. HE SAID THAT THE OPERATION AS IT PERTAINED TO PARAGUAY SHOULD BEGIN SLOWLY STARTING WITH QUALITY LEADS.

4. WITH REGARD TO POSSIBILITY OF THIRD COUNTRY OPERATIONS, USMS ASKED IF COS COULD TRAVEL TO THIRD COUNTRY PERIODICALLY TO COORDINATE OPERATIONS. COS AGREED IN PRINCIPLE, STATING THIS WOULD OF COURSE BE SUBJECT TO HQS AND AMBASSADOR APPROVAL.

5. TEAM SAID THAT IT WOULD START SENDING LEADS TO ASUNCION SHORTLY FOR STATION/EMBASSY COMMENT. ALL AGREED THIS WAS GOOD IDEA IN AS MUCH AS EMBASSY ASUNCION HAD BEEN UNAWARE OF LEADS AVAILABLE TO USMS. THERE WAS A STRONG SENSE AMONG MEETING PARTICIPANTS THAT SOME OF THESE LEADS MIGHT NOT PROVE CREDIBLE AFTER BEING EXAMINED BY MISSION PERSONNEL WHILE OTHERS MIGHT AND THESE WOULD BE FOLLOWED UP ON. USMS SAID IT WOULD BE LOOKING TO STATION AS FOCAL POINT AND COORDINATOR FOR ALL THEIR ACTIVITIES AND IN THIS REGARD COS SAID HE WOULD ENSURE THAT AMBASSADOR WAS KEPT FULLY INFORMED OF USMS ACTIVITIES.

6. WHEN ASKED ABOUT STATION CAPABILITIES COS REPLIED THAT THEY WERE LIMITED AS WE HAD FEW UNILATERAL SOURCES AND WE COULD NOT QUERY LIAISON, GIVEN EXTREME SENSITIVITY OF THE MENGELE CASE. IN RESPONSE TO QUERY, COS REPLIED THAT WE HAD NO TECHNICAL CAPABILITIES. IN ESSENCE, COS SAID WE HAD ONE SOURCE [ ] WHO WE COULD USE TO RUN DOWN LEADS. HOWEVER, COS SAID THAT IF EXISTING RESOURCES WERE NOT SUFFICIENT AND IF CIRCUMSTANCES REQUIRED, WE WERE FULLY PREPARED TO SEEK NEW SOURCES IN SUPPORT OF THIS IMPORTANT ENDEAVOR.

7. BY WAY OF BACKGROUND, TEAM SAID THAT THEY UNDERSTAND THAT PRESIDENT STROESSNER WILL BE MEETING WITH NAZI HUNTER SIMON WIESENTHAL AT REQUEST OF CHANCELLOR KOHL DURING STROESSNER'S UPCOMING VISIT TO GERMANY IN JULY. EMBASSY OFFICERS FOUND THIS SOMEWHAT DIFFICULT TO BELIEVE BUT WE WISH NOTE IT FOR THE RECORD.

8. TEAM ALSO BRIEFED EMBASSY GROUP ON ITS RELATIONS WITH JUSTICE DEPT OSI, WHICH WAS DESCRIBED AS A SMALL ANALYTICAL GROUP WHICH WILL ONLY BE FOCUSED ON RESEARCHING HISTORICAL LEADS TO DETERMINE IF MENGELE WAS EVER IN U.S. CUSTODY. TEAM SAID THAT IT ONLY SHARES PART OF ITS INFORMATION WITH OSI.

9. COS BRIEFED TEAM ON EFFORTS UNDERTAKEN BY STATION TO DATE TO RUN DOWN LEADS GENERATED IN THE EMBASSY, SUCH AS ASUNCION 24203, WHICH CAME FROM DEFATT. TEAM WAS UNAWARE OF THIS LEAD AND SAID IT WOULD LOOK INT ENSURING BETTER COORDINATION OF ALL AVAILABLE DATA UPON ITS RETURN TO WASHINGTON.

10. COMMENT: ALL IN ALL, AN EXTREMELY USEFUL MEETING. THIS MEETING MARKS A QUANTUM LEAP IN OUR JOINT EFFORTS, WHICH HAD HERETOFORE BEEN DEVOTED TO GENERALITIES. IN ITS ROGER CHANNEL MESSAGE EMBASSY HAS RECOMMENDED THAT USMS NOT BE ALLOWED TO HANDLE ANY SOURCES WHO ARE MEMBERS OF THE PARAGUAYAN OPPOSITION. INSTEAD, EMBASSY HAS RECOMMENDED THAT SUCH SOURCES BE HANDLED OPENLY BY EMBASSY OFFICERS. THIS WAS NOT DISCUSSED WITH TEAM WHILE IT WAS HERE. WE SUSPECT THIS COULD BECOME A BONE OF CONTENTION

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**SECRET**

85 7372647 ASP

PAGE 003  
TOR: 222110Z MAY 85

IN 7372647  
[ ] 24380

BETWEEN EMBASSY AND USMS. ALTHOUGH FORMAL MEETING IN EMBASSY LASTED THREE HOURS FOLLOWED BY DRINKS WITH CHARGE AND COS, TIME AND CIRCUMSTANCES DID NOT PERMIT DETAILED DISCUSSIONS ON MECHANICS OF USMS CLANDESTINE OPERATIONS IN REGION. THIS WILL OCCUR WHEN NEXT USMS TEAM VISITS ASUNCION. WE LOOK FORWARD TO THAT VISIT AND RECEIPT OF INITIAL USMS LEADS AS WILL THEN BE IN A BETTER POSITION TO DETERMINE HOW WE CAN BEST HELP.

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